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# Ohio EPA again shuts down Master Metals for emissions

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## CLEVELAND

For the second time in a year, Master Metals Inc. has been ordered shut down because its lead-smelting operations are causing health-threatening violations of air-quality standards.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency yesterday ordered an immediate shutdown of the W. 3rd St. plant. The order by Ohio EPA Director Donald Schregardus said that during the first quarter of 1993, air-lead levels at Master Metals' property line exceeded national air-quality standards by 973%.

Officials for the company could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Master Metals extracts lead from batteries and other materials through a smelting process and then sells the lead.

The Ohio EPA said yesterday's action resulted from Master Metals' failure to comply with an order issued in October requiring the company to comply with national standards by March or face a shutdown.

"Obviously, the company did not comply with the October order," said Tom Rigo, manager of field operations in the agency's division of air-pollution control.

In that order, Master Metals waived its right to appeal a shutdown order. However, it has 10 days to try to demonstrate that its operations are not the source of the pollution problems. But Master Metals, which has a long history of environmental violations, has yet to satisfactorily make that case to state officials.

When the company was shut down last August, state officials said they believed it had the highest lead-pollution levels ever recorded in Ohio. Master Metals was allowed to

resume partial operations in October, but had to cut back by 24% in June when the city of Cleveland won a temporary injunction.

In yesterday's order, Schregardus said Master Metals may not resume operations unless it installs additional air-pollution controls and can ensure proper operations.

The Ohio EPA wants the company to capture 100% of emissions from its furnaces. The only way to do that is to build a structure around the operations, according to Rigo.

"We're not tinkering here anymore. ... They have to come forward with something dramatic," said William Gruber, chief assistant law director for Cleveland, who also believes enclosing the structure may be the best option.

While Master Metals has made some improvements, Gruber said he believes the company has been dragging its feet. "Every step of the way has been a fight in our history with them," Gruber added.